

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently amended) A frame assembly for a loader machine, said loader machine having an modular undercarriage including at least one crossmember and a first and a second ground engaging member, wherein said at least one crossmember has a top surface and said at least one crossmember has a first and a second end such that said first end is attached to said first ground engaging member and said second end is attached to said second ground engaging member, said frame assembly comprising:

a main frame assembly having a base portion and front and rear sections; and
at least one recessed channel defined on said base portion of said main frame assembly, said at least one recessed channel having a defined surface, ~~said at least one recessed channel and~~ extending across the width of said base portion, wherein said for seating the defined surface is seated upon said top surface of said at least one crossmember.

16. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 15, wherein said at least one crossmember is attached with the main frame assembly in an area adjacent the at least one recessed channel.

17. (Currently amended) The frame assembly of claim 15, wherein said at least one recessed channel is positioned between the front and rear sections of said main frame assembly ~~and extends across the entire width of said base portion~~.

18. (Currently amended) The frame assembly of claim 15, wherein the main frame assembly includes:

an upper frame assembly having a pair of space tower assemblies, a pair of side members having front and rear portions with each said side member being connected to a respective one of the pair of tower assemblies and extending longitudinally therefrom, and a crossmember assembly extending between the pair of tower assemblies for connection therewith; and

a lower frame assembly having a pair of spaced vertically oriented side rails and a front wall extending continuously between the side rails for connection therewith, the upper frame assembly is mounted to the lower frame assembly ~~exclusively~~ at a connection between the side members of the upper frame assembly and the respective side rails of the lower frame assembly.

19. (Currently amended) The frame assembly of claim 15, wherein said undercarriage is a tracked undercarriage and wherein said first ground engaging member is a right track assembly and said second ground engaging member is a left track assembly ~~a right and left track assemblies, said right and left track assemblies being connected by said at least one crossmember.~~

20. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 15, wherein said at least one recessed channel defines a strengthened region of said main frame assembly and is operable to provide torsional stiffness to said loader machine.

21. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 18, wherein the lower frame assembly is formed of medium strength steel.

22. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 18, wherein the lower frame assembly further includes said base portion and said at least one recessed channel.

23. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 18, wherein the crossmember assembly is disposed between the front and rear end portions of the upper frame assembly.

24. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 18, wherein the side members of the upper frame assembly extend along the side rails of the lower frame assembly a predetermined distance and terminate rearward of the front wall.

25. (Currently amended) A loader machine ~~having a main frame assembly and an undercarriage wherein said main frame assembly includes a lower frame assembly having front and rear sections and an upper frame assembly, said undercarriage including right and left track assemblies connected by at least one crossmember, said loader machine comprising:~~

an undercarriage having a right and left track assembly connected by at least one crossmember with a top surface; and

a main frame assembly including a lower frame assembly having front and rear sections, an upper frame assembly, and at least one recessed channel defined on said lower frame assembly having a defined surface, said recessed channel extending across the width of said lower frame assembly, wherein said ~~for seating the~~ defined surface is seated upon the said top surface of at least one crossmember.

26. (Previously presented) The loader machine of claim 25, wherein said at least one crossmember is attached with the lower frame assembly in an area adjacent the at least one recessed channel.

27. (Previously presented) The loader machine of claim 25, wherein said at least one recessed channel is positioned between the front and rear sections of said main frame assembly.

28. (Currently amended) The loader machine of claim 25, wherein the upper frame assembly includes a pair of space tower assemblies, a pair of side members having front and rear portions with each said side member being connected to a respective one of the pair of tower assemblies and extending longitudinally therefrom, and a crossmember assembly extending between the pair of tower assemblies for connection therewith and the lower frame assembly includes a pair of spaced vertically oriented side rails and a front wall extending continuously between the side rails for connection therewith, the upper frame assembly being mounted to the lower frame assembly ~~exclusively~~ at a

connection between the side members of the upper frame assembly and the respective side rails of the lower frame assembly.

29. (Previously presented) The loader machine of claim 25, wherein the lower frame assembly is formed of medium strength steel.

30. (Currently amended) A frame assembly for a loader machine having an undercarriage including at least one crossmember with a top surface, said frame assembly comprising:

a main frame assembly having a base portion and front and rear sections; and
at least one opening defined on said base portion of said main frame assembly having a defined surface, said at least one opening extending across at least a portion of the width of said base portion and the defined surface being operably engagable with said top surface of at least one crossmember in a manner that distributes a vertical load of said loader machine substantially evenly along said at least one opening.

31. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 30, wherein said at least one opening is a recessed channel extending across the entire width of said base portion.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 30, wherein said at least one crossmember is attached with the main frame assembly in an area adjacent the at least one opening.

34. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 30, wherein said at least one opening is positioned between the front and rear sections of said main frame assembly.

35. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 30, wherein said at least one opening is shaped for seating against said at least one crossmember and is seated thereupon.

36. (Previously presented) The frame assembly of claim 35, wherein said at least one opening and said at least one crossmember have a channel shape, the channel shape of said at least one opening being formed for mating relation with the channel shape of said at least one crossmember.

Please add new Claims 37-41 as follows:

37. (New) A method of making a loader machine comprising the steps of:
providing an undercarriage having a first and second ground engaging member connected by at least one crossmember; and

mounting a frame assembly having a base portion, front and rear sections, and at least one recessed channel defined on said base portion of said undercarriage, wherein said at least one recessed channel has a defined surface that extends across the width of said base portion and is seated on said crossmember.

38. (New) The frame assembly of claim 37, wherein said crossmember has a top surface and said defined surface of said recessed channel is seated upon said top surface.

39. (New) The frame assembly of claim 37, wherein said undercarriage is a tracked undercarriage and said first and second ground engaging members are track assemblies.

40. (New) The frame assembly of claim 37, wherein said frame assembly includes a lower frame assembly and an upper frame assembly, wherein said lower frame assembly includes said at least one recessed channel, a pair of spaced vertically oriented side rails and a front wall extending continuously between said side rails, and said upper frame

assembly includes a pair of space tower assemblies, a pair of side members with each said side member being connected to a respective one of the pair of tower assemblies and extending longitudinally therefrom, and a crossmember assembly extending between said pair of tower assemblies for connection therewith, and wherein said upper frame assembly is mounted to said lower frame assembly at a connection between said side members of said upper frame assembly and said respective side rails of said lower frame assembly.

41. (New) A frame assembly for a loader machine, said loader machine having an undercarriage including a first and second crossmember, said frame assembly comprising:

- a main frame assembly having a base portion;

- a first recessed channel defined on said base portion and extending across the width of said base portion, wherein said first recessed channel is positioned to seat directly on said first crossmember of said undercarriage; and

- a second recessed channel defined on said base portion and extending across the width of said base portion, wherein said second recessed channel is positioned to seat directly on said second crossmember of said undercarriage.